

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVES FORUM

## Interim Meeting Minutes

### (29<sup>th</sup> Meeting)

Birmingham and Midland Institute, Birmingham

11:00 – 16:00, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017

Quinton Carroll (Chair) (ALGAO) Claire Tsang (sec.) (Historic England), Duncan Brown (Historic England), Elizabeth Walker (Museum Wales/National Panel for Wales), Iain Fraser (HES), Nicky Scott (SMA), Helen Parslow (FAME), Katie Green (ADS), Sam Paul (ClfA), Rhonda Robinson (NI Department for Communities)

#### **Apologies**

Caradoc Peters (University Archaeology UK), Nancy Grace (National Trust), Sarah Morton (ICON/AG)

#### **Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes were approved; the only outstanding action is for DB to discuss accession registers as a resource for developing national archive register with the SMA.

#### **Membership**

The forum welcomed Rhonda Robinson as replacement for John O'Keefe. Kirsty Lingstadt has left HES and therefore the AAF to join Edinburgh University as Head of Digital Library and Depute Director of Library and University Collections and we wish her all the best. QC will contact Mike Heyworth. Gareth Edwards and Lesley Ferguson were made corresponding members.

#### **News updates**

*FAME*

Nothing to report

*SMA*

The big news is the SMA Archives Report out, the headline figures are:

- 119/200 (59.%) of respondents are still actively collecting archaeological archives
- 61/93 (63.5%) of respondents will run out of space in the next 5 years,
- 35/154 (22.7%) of respondents (that previously collected) have stopped collecting.

The report is an item agenda below

## *CIfA*

There is follow up to Southport

(<http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/SouthportreportA4.pdf>); the 21st Century Challenges for Archaeology project. During 2017 the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, in partnership with and funded by Historic England, will be convening discussions and workshops on important issues within the archaeology sector in England. There are a series of “closed” workshops being planned with sector participants, but in addition before each of these there will be an open online debate via the HE LinkedIn

There will be six meeting to discuss the six topics identified in the report one of which will cover archives:

- New models for archive creation, deposition, storage, access and research
- Professional standards and guidance - who sets them and what are they for?
- Designation and management of the archaeological resource in the context of a changing planning system
- New models for local curatorial services: potential future roles for local authority archaeology services and Historic England
- Synthesis of information from developer-funded investigation to create new historical narratives
- Challenges for archaeological publication in a digital age.

Several member of the AAF have been invited to attend.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> March there will be the CIfA Archaeological Archives Group Day Conference and AGM, this is sold out. The topic is ‘Are Archaeological Archives Relevant?’

At the AGM 3 committee members are stepping down, leaving positions for treasurer, secretary and chair as well as normal members.

Work on the template for research and strategy will resume after the day conference.

## *Wales*

The national guidance document has been formally signed off, it is currently in its advertising phase, it has been published on the Federation of Museum and Art Galleries in Wales website (<http://www.welshmuseumsfederation.org/en/news-archive/resources-landing/Collections/national-standard-and-guidance-for-collecting-and-depositing-archaeological-archives-in-wales-2017.html>) and sent to the archaeological trusts, and articles are being written for the CBA Newsletter, the Archaeologist etc.

The national panel is now tackling further issues such as box charges, storage costs, and selection and retention.

Action: DB and EW to discuss EAC acknowledgement in the guidance.

Simon Thurley has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to review national museum storage.

## *HES*

There have been staff changes with Kirsty Lingstadt leaving, she has been replaced by Andrew Nichol and Emily Nimmo is now on maternity leave, Hannah Smith is her replacement.

The restructuring had led to there being two collections department under the Heritage and Conservation directorate, to resolve this; the Heritage Directorate Collections department is now called Archives.

The HES is now investigation the condensing of stores and collaborative partnerships for a joint store.

The Digital Archive is close to going live, and is just completing its testing phase.

The HES are looking at developing new guidelines and deposition agreements.

To complement the Scottish Archaeology Strategy (<http://archaeologystategy.scot/>) a delivery plan has been developed (<http://archaeologystategy.scot/files/2017/01/SAS-Delivery-Plan-16Jan2017.pdf>)

In addition the HES are applying for Archive Accreditation and are launching its archive plan in July 2017.

## *Northern Ireland*

There was restructuring last year, the Historic Environment division is now part of the newly created Department for Communities. It is the same time the HE department has been part of the same department as the National Museum – so there is opportunity there. However the HE division was offered voluntary exit and its department is now reduced by 25%. In addition last year the HE department moved building.

The issue of excavators holding archaeological archive came to head last year with the largest commercial company going bankrupt and the receivers contacting HE to rescue 200 pallets of archaeological archives.

The national museum is looking to develop an archaeology store through partnership projects. In addition the HE department is looking to develop excavation licences as legislation dates to before planning policy 6.

## *Archaeology Data Service*

The ADS library is now online in its beta interface stage: <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/>

The Born Digital project design has gone to Historic England for comment.

### *Historic England*

Internally there is little report, externally we are funding rationalisation project. This called for tender for which the Museum of London, Suffolk, Tullie House, Worcester, and Stroud were successful, this provide a range of sized museums to undertake a reviews of how rationalisation could take place, each organisation will report on this and these will act as case studies and feed into the development of SMA guidance on selection and rationalisation.

The Archaeological Archives team put forward archaeological archives as a topic for Historic England Collaborative PHD funding, and Reading universities application, based on curation of Palaeo-environmental archives was accepted. This is now being advertised.

### *ALGAO*

Staffing is now down 35% on 2008, but thankfully there are no new major crises to report since the loss of Cumbria's HER. ALGAO has undertaken a survey of archives and the take up of OASIS 65% of respondents validate records, with 12% routinely doing this the main reason for not doing this was reported as a lack of staffing. 119 collecting areas are covered by ALGAO Officers, also identified were 14 black holes where archives are held by contractors.

ALGAO is continuing to monitor and comment on proposed changes to planning policies.

(ALGAO) has approved a post-excavation assessment (PXA) advice note, published in the EAA report series: <http://eaareports.org.uk/algao-east/post-excavation-assessment/>

### *UAUK*

There has currently been no response to the archive questionnaire.

Action: CP will chase for the next meeting.

### *The SMA Archives Report*

It was agreed that the AAF will send comment on the report to the SMA

Action: QC to draft and circulate to the AAF

### *Updates from the South West Projects*

News mainly comes from the 'Seeing of Light of Day project' which will be presented on at the ClfA Archaeological archives conference tomorrow (23<sup>rd</sup> March) They have funding from ACE museum resilience fund and are included on the community infrastructure levy fund priorities for Wiltshire.

### *Negative Archives*

There have been several cases of museums expressing that they will no longer collect 'negative' or 'blank' archives. It is noted that this potentially leaves the report as not curated. The term is currently undefined and there is risk that the term could be misused to also class projects which have features but no material archive. It is put forward that the AAF should put forward an advice note on the term.

Action: NS to take the lead on this

#### *OASIS/HIAS*

The number of reports being uploaded to OASIS has increased to 500 per month; this may be a reflection of both the amount of archaeological activity and increased use of OASIS.

The use of the Heritage Information to access archives is being taken forward by DB, with the discussion of using accession registers to enhance the record with the SMA.

#### *Action Plan Updates*

*R1 Produce a policy statement on the significance of archaeological archives nationally, and their importance as a key resource in the future.*

The AAF will raise this at the 21st Century Challenges for Archaeology project meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> April

*R2 Promote the potential of archaeological archives as a resource for engaging all communities.*

This is an on-going task for all members, and will also be covered by the ClfA Archives Group annual meeting on 'Relevance of Archaeological Archives'

*R3 Establish a national strategy for archive completion as a means of providing easy access to the archaeological record.*

This is being undertaken through the HERALD Project

*R4 Develop a national strategy for the storage and curation of archaeological archives.*

This awaits update by Scott Furlong who was unable to attend the meeting

*R5 Ensure that the significance of archives is fully recognised at all stages of planning-led archaeological work.*

ALGAO has approved a post-excavation assessment (PXA) advice note, published in the EAA report series: <http://eaareports.org.uk/algao-east/post-excavation-assessment/>

*R6 Seek solutions for archive material that currently cannot be transferred to a repository.*

This has been revised into an internal HE project and is being undertaken by Claire Tsang, see below. The seeing the light of day project may also provide an example of way forward for partnership storage development

*R7 Develop a framework for the provision of archaeological archive advice to practitioners in planning authorities, contracting organisations, museums, and community groups.*

This is covered by the SMA SSN and ClfA Archives Group

*R8 Promote and publicise the collecting areas map.*

The map is managed by the SMA the funding of the survey is now a formal HE project for the next 3 years.

*A.O.B.*

SP: Gloucestershire standards have now gone live: <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/archaeology/archaeological-planning-advice/>

EW: HLF funding was raised as an issue, as although the organisation will fund projects it will not fund storage of the products

CT: Reported that the fact finding project on deep storage options was nearing completion and would circulate it to the AAF for comment. It is hoped the report will be published in the HE research Report series.

*Date & location of next meeting*

The location for the meeting will be Edinburgh; the date is to be arranged after the meeting